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GULFPORT RUNS DOWN CHAMPLIN IN \$300,000 BET ON SUNSHINE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024) – Gulfport ran down pacesetting favorite **Champlin** in the final strides to win Saturday's 16th running of the \$300,000 Bet On Sunshine Stakes (Listed) at Churchill Downs by a neck. Angkor, who closed late from the outside, was another neck back in third.

Gulfport clocked six furlongs on a "fast" track in a swift 1:08.97 under jockey **Erik Asmussen** who rode for his father Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** and owners **L. William Heiligbrodt, Corinne Heiligbrodt, Jackpot Farm, Whispering Oaks Farm LLC and Coolmore Stud**. This was the first stakes win at Churchill Downs for **Erik Asmussen**.

The win was worth \$181,900 and the 4-year-old's record improved to 9-4-3-1—\$635,250. This marked his second career stakes win after earlier winning the \$173,000 Bashford Manor (Listed) at Churchill Downs in 2022. During his 2-year-old season, the colt also finished second in the \$200,000 Saratoga Special (GII) and \$300,000 Hopeful (GI) and was third in the \$500,000 Champagne (GI).

Champlin, the 2-1 betting choice, set the pace by leading the field of seven older horses through splits of :22.21, :45.36 and :56.85 as Gulfport tracked in second and Angkor raced in third. Down the stretch, Gulfport and Angkor closed into the tiring but determined leader and Gulfport, between horses, emerged as the winner in a three-horse photo for the win.

"This is horse ran a huge race today and he's a very special horse to me," Erik Asmussen said. "I think I started getting on him when I weighed 140 pounds and now I got to ride him for a stakes win. I can't thank the connections enough for giving me the opportunity to ride him this afternoon. He gave me his all today and I was thrilled he was able to get the job done."

Gulfport returned \$16.72, \$6.32 and \$3.70 as the 7-1 fifth betting choice. Champlin, under **Mitchell Murrill**, paid \$3.34 and \$2.86. Angkor, ridden by **Gerardo Corrales**, returned \$3.30 to show as the 5-2 second favorite.

Tejano Twist, Churchill Downs' all-time win-leader **Bango**, **Happy American** and **Gold Luck** completed the order of finish. **Big Hat Willie** and **Happy Is a Choice** were scratched.

Gulfport is a son of Uncle Mo out the Unbridled's Song mare Fame and Fortune. He was bred in Kentucky by **Diamond Creek Farm**.

The Bet On Sunshine is named for the 13-time stakes winning sprinter who won back-to-back runnings of the Aristides Handicap (Grade III). Trained by **Paul McGee**, **Bet On Sunshine** posted a record of 22-7-10 and \$1,449,892 from 47 starts between 1995-2002 for owner **David P. Holloway Racing Inc.** The Florida-bred son of Big Bet finished third in the Breeders' Cup Sprint (GI) twice behind **Elmhurst** and **Hesabull** in 1997 at Hollywood Park and behind **Kona Gold** and the filly **Honest Lady** in 2000 at Churchill Downs. He also ran in the 2001 Sprint but finished 13th. Bet On Sunshine won eight of 20 starts at Churchill Downs with four seconds and four thirds.

BET ON SUNSHINE QUOTES

Erik Asmussen (jockey, Gulfport, winner): “This is horse ran a huge race today and he’s a very special horse to me. I think I started getting on him when I weighed 140 pounds and now I got to ride him for a stakes win. I can’t thank the connections enough for giving me the opportunity to ride him this afternoon. He gave me his all today and I was thrilled he was able to get the job done.”

Mitchell Murrill (jockey, Champlin, runner-up): “He ran his heart out each step of the way. He was travelling great on the front end and tried hard through the wire. It was a tough beat.”

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack (“CDRT”), the world’s most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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